

his wife, Honey; Janice Bowling, candidate for Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Announcing Action on the Labor Disputes Affecting Pacific Coast Ports

October 8, 2002

I appreciate my Cabinet Secretaries joining me here for this announcement.

For over a week our ports along the Pacific coast have been shut down. These ports handle more than \$300 billion a year in trade. The work stoppage is hurting our entire economy. It is hurting truckers and rail operators who carry goods to other parts of America. It's hurting farmers and ranchers and manufacturers, retailers and consumers who make, buy, and sell the products that pass through our ports.

The crisis in our western ports is hurting the economy. It is hurting the security of our country, and the Federal Government must act. Americans are working hard every day to bring our economy back from recession. This Nation simply cannot afford to have hundreds of billions of dollars a year in potential manufacturing and agricultural trade sitting idle. We can't afford it. Because of the situation at the west coast ports, our economy is already losing up to \$1 billion a day, economic losses that translate into lost jobs.

The farm economy alone is losing a thousand jobs a day. Automotive plants cannot get all the parts they need, and they're laying off workers. Stores cannot begin stocking up for the holiday season. All of this will only worsen as time goes on.

The work stoppage also threatens our national defense. These ports load the ships that carry supplies to our men and women in uniform. These ports also receive parts and materials used by our defense contractors to complete projects and maintain military equipment.

Federal mediators have been trying to get the workers and port operators to resume operations while they negotiate their dif-

ferences. The Secretary of Labor has been working hard to get people back to work. Unfortunately, the union and the management have been unable to reach an agreement. After a lot of work, particularly by our Labor Department and Secretary, after a lot of discussions, we have been unable to bring the two parties together, and therefore stronger action is required. Because the operation of western ports is vital to our economy and to our military, I have determined that the current situation imperils our national health and safety.

I have appointed a board of inquiry to investigate the issues at stake. Today the board submitted an official report stating each party's position. I am now directing Attorney General Ashcroft to seek an injunction under the Taft-Hartley Act, ending the lockout and requiring work at the ports to resume at a normal pace. This dispute between management and labor cannot be allowed to further harm the economy and force thousands of working Americans from their jobs.

This injunction will allow the parties more time to resolve their differences. It is not, however, a permanent solution to the problem, and the Federal Government will continue working with both sides to pursue a settlement. The ultimate responsibility for an agreement lies with the worker representatives and the port operators. I expect both sides to put the concerns of our national health and safety first and work in good faith to resolve their differences as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Letter to the Attorney General Directing Action on the Labor Disputes Affecting Pacific Coast Ports

October 8, 2002

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

On October 7, 2002, by virtue of the authority vested in me by section 206 of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947 (61 Stat. 155; 29 U.S.C. 176) (the "Act"), I issued